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John the Baptist's Relation to the Church.

The proposition of this article is that John the Baptist began the Church of Christ.

The word for church in the language from which it is translated in our Bible means the chosen congregation, or the congregation chosen, or congregation. It is compared to a building by several divine writers. Viewed from an intelligent conception of what belongs to a building, there are several departments or stages to pass through before the building is beheld in its complete or glorified condition.

The preparation is the first stage. It is not the building, and no part can be viewed as the building, yet, nevertheless, it is impossible to construct a building without preparation.

The relation that the Baptist stood in to the church was the stage of preparing for the building. He was completely divorced from the Jewish or Mosaic institutions. John received his authority direct from God. Probably no other individual but the Son of God himself was nearer great Jehovah. John testifies that He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he who baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.' St. John I. xxxiii.

Here is testimony that shows that the baptism of John was of divine origin, by the direct command of God, and the baptism was of water too. A spiritual baptism is here promised also, but one individual only was entrusted with that ceremony or duty, and it was never brought to a form and no commission given to man to act in behalf of Christ in performing it.

St. Mark, I. i, asserts that the Baptist's message was the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It consisted in 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.' Mark I. iii. The beginning of the Gospel was the virtual beginning of the Gospel, although the work done was preparatory.

Every evidence available shows that John introduced the baptism by water, and there was no change in the mode from the time of his first baptism performed in Jordan, until other modes were introduced in the falling away. There may have been a change in the formula of words used at the performance of the acts, because Christ gave one when he gave his great commission to the Apostles. It is probable, that a different formula was used while Christ was on earth, and he reconstructed it when the disciples were instructed to go into all the world and teach and baptize, while the manner of performing the baptism remainded the same.

There are many things that conflict with the conjecture that John used single immersion.

1. His special mission was to prepare a people for Christ, and the burden of his ministry was to call attention to the Christ. It may seem out of place for Christ to be baptized in his own name. Yet it was fully as inconsistent, so far as man's reason goes, for him to be baptized at all. But he declares of himself that it was the fulfilling of righteousness, or right doing. Christ, therefore, according to his own testimony did right in being baptized.

2. Immediately after Christ's baptism he began to call men as disciples, and it is unreasonable to suppose that they were baptized by Christ into his own name, when the attending circumstances show that some of them were unacquainted with him, and one even doubted that any good thing could come out of Nazareth, and thus he was received and made an official member.

3. All the Apostles were baptized by John most certainly. Just before Pentecost, an Apostle had to be chosen to fill the office from which Judas fell, and out of the one hundred and twenty, who were true and faithful disciples and together, there were only two whose experimental qualifications were such as to make them eligible for that apostleship. The qualification was that they should know all about Christ, beginning at the baptism of John. He no doubt was one of the *prepared* ones who was baptized before Jesus, and never baptized again except by the Holy Ghost.

4. The discovery of John's disciples by members of Christ's congregation shows that they were not again baptized. Apollos, who knew only the baptism of John, was not rebaptized, but the way of the Lord was expounded to him more perfectly by Aquila and Priscilla. Paul did indeed find some and baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus. They were baptized with the baptism of repentance, which is one and the same as saying the baptism of water, but they had not been baptized with the Holy Ghost, which is one and the same as saying baptized in the Lord Jesus, and in that special case the formula consisted in laying on hands and no doubt some form of invocation. As no authoritative form of this baptism has been given, it was done in a way that suited the nature of the case. At Pentecost the form was like the sound of a mighty rushing wind.

5. God is a god of system and order, and he would not have two or three modes of baptism in his church, by his own authority at the same time. The Baptist declares that he was sent to baptize in water unto repentance. The apostles were all baptized by him, and without question his water baptism was the same as the water baptism which all scholars admit was the universal practice of all antiquity—Trine Immersion. Mark planted a church in Egypt, and that church came into the time past now covered by existing history, and Trine Immersion was the established and only orthodox baptism. Matthew planted churches in other nations and when they come within the lines of histories now preserved practiced Trine Immersion. Jerusalem had a succession of Bishops from Pentecost to St. Cyril in A. D. 315, and he discourses on the mode and then presents it as the established practice of the Church of Jesus Christ at Jerusalem, which was Trine Immersion, and the first bishop was James, the apostle, who was most certainly baptized by John the Baptist, and the second, James the Just, one of the seventy sent out.

The testimony of John, showing that he came to commence the church of Jesus Christ by doing a preparatory work, and baptizing multitudes and then Christ, it would be ridiculous that he should repudiate the work, and re baptize in water those who had been baptized unto his coming or manifestation, and then introduce into the church a new mode, and thus cut himself and all of John's disciples from a baptismal relation with the church established by the apostles in various quarters of the earth. The New Testament Christians recognized no such separation. John's ministry was regarded as the commencement of the gospel dispensation and the church of Jesus Christ, and every evidence harmonizes with the fact that there was only one mode of baptism authorized by God, and that has continued in the church until this day. There is not the slightest evidence to support a claim that the primitive church contained two classes of baptized individuals in the church, and it is equally inconsistent to have a church in modern times constructed of two or more classes of baptized persons and persons not baptized at all.

The Brethren Church recognizes Trine Immersion only as Christian Baptism, and persons counted as members without it, is irregular and contrary to what is generally believed and accepted.

The two other important teachings of the ministry of John the Baptist are the baptism of the Holy Ghost and the punishment of the wicked. Sufficient has been already said upon the first. There is not room to say very much, because this is a work belonging to Jesus.

The reference to the punishment of the wicked is most important. John calls it a baptism with fire, and defines it farther in reference to the wheat and chaff. Mat. III, xii. The sayings of Christ have been spiritualized, distorted and twisted so that the ordinary man would suppose that he said nothing. But John, in a few dicisive words, announce a Baptism of fire that will burn the chaff, in such a manner that the sophistry of age can not weaken its power.

John looked at every thing through spectacles of baptism.

1. Baptism of water, a symbolic regeneration.

2. Baptism of the Holy Ghost, the comfort and strength of the redeemed which alone warrants the actual completion of the New Birth in the resurrection of the just.

3. Baptism of fire that will burn all that is not glorified in the resurrection of the just, and the ungodly, leaving nothing but the pure and good which are gathered into the garner.

Hamans and Mordecais.

A lecturer recently drew his illustrations from the Bible, and his subject was 'Sunshine.' He made the chief duty of man here in this life the work of making others happy. There existed in old times a national hatred between the Agagites and the Jews. Haman, the Agagite, was honored by the king and made the chief prince of the kingdom. The people bowed down to him and honored him. But Mordecai knew him from before, and hated him and his tribe, the enemies of the Jews, and he became a stump in the presence of Haman and would not bow to him. This greatly insulted the chief prince, and he devised a scheme to murder the whole Jewish people because this stumpy Jew would not bow to him. Haman went to his wife and named over the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and how the king had promoted him above every other man in the kingdom, and also that he had been invited to the queen's banquet alone with the king. Yet, he declared, all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting in the king's gate. This little insult upon his royal highness was a weight on the dishonorable side of the balance which out weighed all the glory of his position in his own estimation.

Haman has justly been pronounced a fool. If he had meekly walked around the stump, his royal glory would have remained unscathed. But he became revengeful, and as a result lost his own life on his own gallows.

The world is full of Hamans and Mordecais. There are even many in the church. The Hamans, instead of walking around the Mordecais begin to quarrel with them and the result often is spiritual ruin to both. The only sensible way to deal with stumps and posts of humanity is to walk around them, and pay as little attention to them as possible.

Thousands cover up all their 'Sunshine' of life by foolish acts like Haman. All that would have been necessary to save his family, children, life, home and glory can be expressed in three words—pass by Mordecai.

Men frequently stumble over some little slight and plunge headlong into ruin as an attempt to ruin another. A little courtesy would prevent all such blotches upon the happy experience of life, and prevent oceans of trouble.

Pride, pride, pride. Keep yourself above a proud heart, if you would be happy in time and glorified in eternity.

Hamans and Mordecais get into the church once in a while. If Mordecai does not bow down, Haman is much grieved. Although he is most honored, his word carries more authority than the word of any other, he is esteemed above every other one, yet all that availeth him nothing so long as Mordecai sits at the doorway. Some woman suggests that he should be hung, and poor, foolish, mortified Haman straitway proceeds to make the gallows.

A LARGE NUMBER OF SAMPLE COPIES ARE SENT OUT THIS WEEK, AND THOSE WHO RECEIVE THEM ARE INVITED TO EXAMINE THEM, AND FAVOR US WITH THEIR SUBSCRIPTION.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

'Go teach all nations' applies in its bearings to more persons than the unfortunate individuals who are made preachers.

We are delighted with the style of discussion in Pacifics this week. If all the brethren will follow the 'Pacific' example everybody will be pleased.

A GREAT MISTAKE.—A brother writes as though the publishers of this paper had decided not to publish any thing in the way of argument, supporting the teachings of the Bible and the church. This is a strange conclusion, drawn from what has been said on that line. Another wants to know how a reply can be written without using the name of the writer. This is easy. Argument should be directed at principles and propositions. But to many that does not seem sensational enough, and the arguments must deal with men instead of theories, and so the use of names is either accompanied by flattery or wounds.

MASON'S BOOK.—It may as well be understood that Bro. Mason's Book is not an authorized exponent of the doctrines of the Brethren church, or in no sense to supplant the gospel. He has called it the 'Gospel According to Jesus.' The book sets forth his views of the gospel teachings. No one authorized him or any one else to write a book of doctrine of the Brethren church. Whenever any one man or set of men are authorized to produce such a book, then the high position that the Brethren have taken will have been abandoned, and a position taken with all creed-making churches. We have held out the inducement in the past to learn whether there was such an element of any strength with us, and there seemed to be none. The Bible only as a guide was the demand everywhere, and so may it ever be. Those who are writing testimonies of the book are writing their opinions of it as a book, and as such to encourage its sale. Any man has a right to write a book, but no one has a right to even presume to write one as an authoritative document of the Brethren church. We recommend the book as containing many excellent things.

The woman who is the subject of the S. S. Lesson for next Lord's Day, had the greatest confidence in the power of the Lord Jesus. She concluded in her heart that if only she could touch the hem of his garment she would be healed. She did, and drew from Christ healing power. He felt that 'virtue' had gone out of him. Christ was filled with the presence of healing virtue, not only in a physical sense but in a mental or spiritual sense also. He healed men from the diseases of sin, or in other words, the abnormal condition of the mind. Sin is the result of impure thoughts, and individuals sometimes become so abandoned that it is impossible for them to have any thing originate in their hearts that is pure and good. That condition is a disease of the soul, and Jesus stands ready to heal all who have faith in him and will come to him, as the woman did. He is as ready to heal souls now, as he was willing to heal infirmities of the flesh when he was on earth. Virtue does come out of Jesus, but the source of supply never weakens, and the supply never grows less.

Bro. Beer speaks a good word for the Annual, which we are glad to hear. We have not praised it much because we thought it ought to be much better. Work is already commenced on the one for 1890, which we mean to make an excellent one. There are still a few left for 1889, and send along your order. The sale has been better this year than any previous year, and is encouraging to add to it features of interest for next year.

A remarkable revival in the study of the Old Bible has taken place recently. The late discoveries in Bible lands has completely confounded the exultant infidels and stopped their mouths so effectually that people are looking into it as a new revelation. God has stored away in the old ruins of cities and cloisters of the Orient, such corroborative evidence of his inspired book that every unbeliever is being silenced, as the treasures are unlocked to man's perception and knowledge.